Israel's Eschatological Mission: A Christian Perspective on Messianic Expectations and the Role of the Antichrist

Douglas C. Youvan

doug@youvan.com

October 17, 2024

In recent years, Israel's geopolitical actions, particularly those surrounding the Temple Mount and the potential rebuilding of the Third Temple, have garnered attention not only for their political implications but also for their eschatological significance. For many Christians, these developments are seen as fulfilling Biblical prophecy, signaling the approach of the end times. According to Christian eschatology, these actions may be interpreted as paving the way for the rise of the Antichrist, a false messianic figure who will deceive the world before the Second Coming of Christ. Drawing on the perspectives of Alexander Dugin and various Christian interpretations, this paper explores Israel's role in hastening the Messianic age and its implications for global Christianity. By examining the intersection of political events and theological prophecy, we provide a comprehensive Christian view on how Israel's actions align with end-times expectations, focusing on the potential rise of the Antichrist.

Keywords: Israel, eschatology, Messianic age, Antichrist, Third Temple, prophecy, Christian theology, Alexander Dugin, end times, Temple Mount, global geopolitics, Christian eschatology.

Introduction

Geopolitical and Religious Tensions in the Middle East

The Middle East remains at the center of global attention due to its deep-rooted geopolitical and religious conflicts. Central to these tensions is Israel, whose existence and actions are perceived differently by various religious and political groups worldwide. Since its establishment in 1948, Israel's expansionist policies, especially in territories considered sacred by Jews, Christians, and Muslims, have contributed to ongoing conflicts. The recent push by far-right Zionist factions toward the rebuilding of the Third Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem has escalated tensions, as this site is profoundly significant in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic eschatologies.

This religious backdrop intersects with geopolitical aspirations, as Israel's actions are not merely about national defense or territorial gain but are seen by many as efforts to fulfill religious prophecies. Such moves, often interpreted as steps toward realizing the Messianic age, have the potential to inflame the region, especially considering the Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam's holiest sites, stands on the same land. The consequences of these actions reverberate throughout the Islamic world, particularly among the Shia community, who view them as harbingers of the end times.

Eschatological Themes in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

At the heart of this conflict lie different eschatological expectations. In Judaism, the Messiah is expected to come and lead the Jewish people, rebuilding the Temple and bringing about an era of global peace and righteousness. For many ultra-Orthodox Jews, the reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem is a key step toward this Messianic age. However, Christianity and Islam offer contrasting interpretations of this anticipated event.

In Christian eschatology, the Messiah is Jesus Christ, who is expected to return for a second time, but before this occurs, the Antichrist must rise, deceiving many and attempting to establish global dominion. Many Christians, particularly from evangelical and fundamentalist traditions, interpret Israel's actions as signs of the approaching end times, where the figure anticipated as the Jewish Messiah might instead be the Antichrist.

In Shia Islam, the eschatological figure akin to the Antichrist is the Dajjal, who will emerge before the return of the Mahdi, the hidden Imam, who will restore justice. The destruction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the rebuilding of the Third Temple are viewed by Shia Muslims as direct precursors to the appearance of the Dajjal.

These contrasting religious views underscore the profound tensions surrounding Israel's actions, with each group seeing them through a different prophetic lens.

Alexander Dugin's Perspective and its Resonance with Christian Eschatology

Russian philosopher Alexander Dugin, a prominent voice in global geopolitical and eschatological discourse, has weighed in on the significance of Israel's geopolitical maneuvers. According to Dugin, the actions of Israel, particularly those driven by far-right Zionist factions, are not just political moves but part of a broader eschatological mission aimed at hastening the arrival of their Messiah. He argues that these moves, such as efforts to rebuild the Temple, are seen by Zionists as necessary steps toward the Messianic age, but from a Christian and Islamic perspective, these very actions align with the rise of the Antichrist or the Dajjal.

Dugin's perspective resonates with Christian eschatology, particularly with those who interpret the Antichrist as someone who will deceive the Jewish people by appearing as their long-awaited Messiah. According to this view, Israel's political and religious actions might be setting the stage for the fulfillment of Biblical prophecies regarding the Antichrist's rise and global dominion. For many Christians, this reading of events reinforces the belief that the end times are near, as foretold in the Book of Revelation.

Purpose of the Paper

This paper aims to explore Israel's potential role in accelerating the coming of the Messiah, as viewed through the lens of Christian eschatology, and the belief in the emergence of the Antichrist. By examining Israel's geopolitical actions, religious aspirations, and how these align with Christian and Islamic eschatological beliefs, the paper will present a cohesive argument that situates Israel at the heart of contemporary eschatological thought. Drawing from Alexander Dugin's analysis, it will offer insights into how these events may be unfolding in line with Biblical

prophecy, potentially heralding the Antichrist's rise before the Second Coming of Christ.

Messianic Expectations in Israel

Historical and Religious Background of the Jewish Expectation of the Messiah

The Jewish concept of the Messiah (Hebrew: *Mashiach*, meaning "anointed one") is rooted in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) and has been a central element of Jewish religious belief for millennia. The Messiah is traditionally expected to be a future Jewish king from the Davidic line (descendant of King David) who will be anointed by God to restore Israel, rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, and establish a period of global peace and divine justice. This Messianic age is seen as a time when the Jewish people will return to their ancestral land, be freed from oppression, and the moral order will be restored on Earth.

In the Torah and prophetic books, references to the Messiah are scattered, with passages in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel laying the foundation for later Jewish Messianic hopes. For instance, Isaiah 11:1-9 speaks of a "shoot from the stump of Jesse" (David's father) who will bring justice and peace. This future figure is expected to not only rule over Israel but also extend God's law and peace to all nations, fulfilling the covenant between God and His people.

Throughout history, particularly during periods of persecution and exile, Jewish communities have clung to Messianic hope as a source of spiritual resilience. The idea of the Messiah became especially prominent during the Babylonian Exile and the Roman occupation of Judea, giving rise to heightened expectations of a political and spiritual savior.

The Connection Between the Rebuilding of the Third Temple and the Messianic Age

A central feature of the Jewish Messianic expectation is the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. The First Temple, built by King Solomon, was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE, while the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. Jewish tradition holds that the Messiah will restore this Temple, which is referred to as the "Third Temple."

The rebuilding of the Temple holds immense religious significance, as it is believed to be the place where God's presence will once again dwell with His people. The restoration of Temple rituals, including animal sacrifices and the observance of festivals as prescribed in the Torah, is seen as integral to the Messianic age. Many religious Jews believe that without the Temple, the Jewish people cannot fulfill their covenantal obligations to God in their entirety.

The connection between the Third Temple and the Messianic era is also emphasized in Jewish eschatology. According to the Mishnah and other rabbinic writings, the construction of the Third Temple will mark the beginning of the final redemption. The Book of Ezekiel (chapters 40-48) provides a detailed vision of this future Temple, symbolizing the renewal of God's covenant and the ushering in of an age of peace and divine order.

Recent Political Developments in Israel and the Messianic Anticipation

In modern times, the concept of rebuilding the Third Temple has moved from theological discourse to political reality, driven by religious and political factions within Israel. Since the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israel captured East Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, there has been a growing movement within ultra-Orthodox and far-right political groups advocating for the reconstruction of the Temple.

The Temple Mount is currently home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, two of Islam's holiest sites, making the site a flashpoint for religious and political tensions. Despite this, some Jewish religious movements have begun preparing for the eventual rebuilding of the Temple by creating institutions dedicated to the study of Temple rituals, crafting Temple vessels, and even training priests (*kohanim*) for future service.

Recent political developments in Israel have further fueled these Messianic aspirations. The rise of far-right politicians, including figures like Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir, who have expressed support for increased Jewish presence and sovereignty over the Temple Mount, has been seen by some as aligning with the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. These figures, part of the Religious Zionism movement, advocate for Jewish access to the Temple Mount and challenge the *status quo* arrangement that limits Jewish prayer at the site.

Moreover, plans and preparations by groups like the Temple Institute—a religious organization dedicated to preparing for the Third Temple—have grown in scope and visibility. The Temple Institute has reconstructed many of the sacred vessels described in the Torah, including the golden menorah, priestly garments, and incense altars, all intended for use in a future Temple. For many of these groups, the construction of the Third Temple is not merely symbolic but a concrete step toward the Messianic era.

Politically, Israel's leadership has walked a delicate line, balancing these religious aspirations with the realities of international diplomacy and the volatile nature of Middle Eastern geopolitics. However, far-right movements within the country have continued to push for actions that would assert Jewish sovereignty over the Temple Mount. This is seen by some religious Jews as an essential step toward bringing the Messiah.

Theologically, many Israeli and international Jews view these developments as signs that the Messianic age is near. The connection between current political actions, such as increasing Jewish access to the Temple Mount, and the prophetic vision of the Third Temple has deepened among these groups, making the political landscape in Israel not just a matter of statehood, but of spiritual significance.

These developments have raised tensions, particularly with the Muslim world, as the destruction of Islamic holy sites on the Temple Mount to make way for the Third Temple would likely provoke widespread conflict. Yet, for Messianic-minded groups in Israel, these political steps are part of the divine plan to hasten the coming of the Messiah, believing that the challenges and conflicts are necessary precursors to redemption.

Christian Eschatology and the Antichrist

Christian Understanding of the Antichrist vs. the Jewish Concept of the Messiah

In Christian eschatology, the Antichrist plays a pivotal role in the end times, and the concept stands in sharp contrast to the Jewish understanding of the Messiah. While the Jewish Messiah is expected to be a divinely chosen leader who will restore Israel and establish an era of global peace, Christians view the Antichrist

as a deceptive figure who will falsely claim to be the Messiah and lead many astray.

The term "Antichrist" is explicitly mentioned in the letters of John (1 John 2:18-22, 4:3; 2 John 1:7), where the Antichrist is described as a figure who denies Christ and opposes His teachings. Christians interpret the Antichrist as a false messianic figure who will arise in the last days, attempting to deceive the world into believing he is the savior. This individual will oppose Christ and seek to establish his rule over all nations, before being ultimately defeated by Jesus Christ upon His return.

Jewish eschatology, on the other hand, does not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, instead awaiting a future descendant of King David who will fulfill the Messianic promises by establishing peace and rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. Thus, while Jews expect their Messiah to be a political and spiritual leader, Christians see this expected Messiah, if he arises before Christ's return, as the Antichrist in disguise.

The New Testament Portrayal of the End Times and the Antichrist

The New Testament, particularly in the Book of Revelation, provides detailed prophecies about the end times, focusing on the rise of the Antichrist and the final conflict between good and evil. According to Revelation (13:1-10), the Antichrist is depicted as a beast emerging from the sea, empowered by Satan to deceive the nations. This figure will perform false miracles, blaspheme against God, and demand worship from the world. He will establish a tyrannical rule and persecute Christians and all those who refuse to follow him.

The Apostle Paul also references the Antichrist in his letters, particularly in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10, where he describes the "man of lawlessness" who will exalt himself above all that is worshipped and proclaim himself to be God. This lawless one is understood to be the Antichrist, whose appearance will precede the second coming of Christ and be marked by widespread deception and apostasy.

For Christians, the rise of the Antichrist signifies the beginning of the Great Tribulation, a period of intense suffering and moral decay, which will ultimately lead to Christ's triumphant return. During this time, Christians believe the

Antichrist will deceive many, especially within Israel, by presenting himself as the long-awaited Jewish Messiah.

The Significance of Israel's Geopolitical Moves from a Christian Perspective

From a Christian eschatological standpoint, modern-day Israel's actions—particularly those related to the rebuilding of the Temple and the increasing control over the Temple Mount—are often viewed as fulfilling key Biblical prophecies. Many evangelical Christians see the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 as a prophetic sign, a precondition for the return of Christ. The Book of Ezekiel (chapters 37-39) describes a vision of the Jewish people being gathered back to their homeland, which many interpret as a foreshadowing of Israel's modern political re-emergence.

The potential rebuilding of the Third Temple is particularly significant for Christians who see this as a critical event that precedes the Antichrist's arrival. According to Daniel 9:27, the Antichrist will make a covenant with many for seven years, and in the middle of that period, he will desecrate the Temple by placing the "abomination of desolation" within it. This act of sacrilege will mark the beginning of the final phase of the Tribulation, during which the Antichrist will seek global dominion.

For many Christians, Israel's moves toward asserting control over the Temple Mount, and the growing calls among religious groups for the construction of the Third Temple, are seen as aligning with these prophetic events. Far-right political movements in Israel advocating for such actions are thus perceived as inadvertently laying the groundwork for the Antichrist's reign, according to Christian eschatology.

In this context, the geopolitical moves of Israel are not viewed as mere political maneuvers but as prophetic indicators of the unfolding of the end times. Christian interpretations often connect current events with passages from the Old and New Testaments, such as the prophecies in Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation, to argue that Israel's actions are leading toward the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. The re-establishment of the Temple is seen as a critical marker for the beginning of the Tribulation and the rise of the Antichrist, which, according to Christian belief, will ultimately culminate in the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His eternal kingdom.

In conclusion, from a Christian eschatological perspective, Israel's geopolitical actions—especially those related to the Temple Mount—are viewed as aligning with Biblical prophecies concerning the rise of the Antichrist. This interpretation is grounded in the belief that the actions of the current Israeli government, whether intentional or not, are paving the way for the fulfillment of end-time prophecies that will lead to the second coming of Christ.

Shia Islamic Perspective: The Dajjal

Overview of the Shia Islamic Eschatological View on the Dajjal (Islamic Antichrist)

In Islamic eschatology, both Sunni and Shia traditions recognize the figure of the Dajjal as the ultimate deceiver and a major sign of the end times. The Dajjal, often referred to as the "False Messiah" or the "Great Deceiver," is depicted as an evil figure who will emerge before the Day of Judgment, spreading falsehood and tyranny across the world. While both Sunni and Shia Muslims share the belief in the Dajjal, Shia eschatology offers a distinct interpretation that is deeply intertwined with the expectation of the return of the Mahdi, the hidden Twelfth Imam in Shia belief.

Shia Muslims believe that before the return of the Mahdi, who will bring justice and establish a divine order, the Dajjal will appear, leading humanity astray. The Dajjal is often described in Islamic traditions as having supernatural powers and being able to perform false miracles to convince people that he is the true savior. In Shia belief, his reign will be marked by chaos, moral corruption, and oppression, particularly targeting the righteous believers.

The Mahdi, who has been in occultation (hidden) since the 9th century according to Shia doctrine, will return during this period of global turmoil to defeat the Dajjal, restore justice, and bring about the final victory of Islam. The arrival of the Mahdi and the subsequent defeat of the Dajjal are seen as pivotal moments in Islamic eschatology, ushering in the final judgment and the end of the world.

How Shia Leaders (such as Those in Iran and Hezbollah) Interpret Israel's Moves as Signaling the Rise of the Dajjal

For many Shia leaders, particularly in Iran and Hezbollah, Israel's actions—especially in Jerusalem and around the Al-Aqsa Mosque—are viewed through an eschatological lens. Iran's theocratic leadership, grounded in Shia Islamic teachings, often interprets political developments in the region as signs of the impending arrival of the Mahdi and the corresponding rise of the Dajjal.

The control and expansionist policies of Israel, particularly in East Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, are seen as indicative of the Dajjal's influence. For Shia Muslims, the Temple Mount (where the Al-Aqsa Mosque is located) holds profound religious significance, and any attempt by Israel to assert dominance over this sacred site is viewed with extreme alarm. Israeli political moves, such as the possible destruction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque to make way for the Third Temple, are seen as provocations that align with the signs of the end times.

Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia political and militant group, often frames its resistance to Israel in eschatological terms. Leaders such as Hassan Nasrallah have repeatedly referred to Israel as a manifestation of the Dajjal's influence, arguing that Israel's actions represent the forces of deception and tyranny. These leaders believe that the eventual destruction of Israel is not just a political goal but a divine mandate, necessary to pave the way for the Mahdi's return and the defeat of the Dajjal.

Iran, as a Shia-majority country, often supports these interpretations. Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, frequently referred to Israel as a "cancerous tumor" that must be eradicated. His successors have continued this rhetoric, linking Israel's actions to the rise of the Dajjal and positioning Iran as a key player in the eschatological struggle between good (the Mahdi) and evil (the Dajjal).

Comparison of Islamic and Christian Understandings of This Eschatological Figure

Both Islamic and Christian eschatologies describe a figure who will emerge at the end of times to deceive humanity and lead many astray before the final judgment. In Christianity, this figure is the Antichrist, while in Islam, he is known as the

Dajjal. Despite differences in details, both religions share a common understanding that this individual will perform false miracles, claim divine authority, and lead a reign of deception before being ultimately defeated by a divinely appointed savior—Christ in Christianity and the Mahdi in Islam.

In both traditions, the Dajjal/Antichrist will appear as a false messianic figure, using deception to gain followers. In Islam, the Dajjal is a one-eyed figure who will falsely claim to be the Messiah, leading many astray with his ability to perform wonders. Similarly, the Christian Antichrist is expected to deceive the world through false miracles, gaining control and demanding worship.

From both Christian and Islamic perspectives, the establishment of a political and religious dominion over Jerusalem is often seen as a critical sign of the end times. Israel's actions in the Middle East, particularly concerning the Temple Mount and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, are viewed with deep suspicion and concern. For both Christians and Muslims, these actions are interpreted as potentially paving the way for the Antichrist or Dajjal, who will take advantage of religious and geopolitical tensions to establish his reign.

This shared concern over Israel's Messianic aspirations binds these eschatological narratives. For Christians, the anticipation of the rebuilding of the Third Temple signals the coming of the Antichrist, while for Shia Muslims, it is seen as a sign of the Dajjal's arrival. In both cases, the culmination of these events is expected to lead to a final confrontation between good and evil, followed by the ultimate triumph of the Messiah (Jesus for Christians, the Mahdi for Shia Muslims) and the restoration of divine justice.

Conclusion

The Shia Islamic view of the Dajjal, particularly as interpreted by Iran and Hezbollah, positions Israel's geopolitical moves within a larger eschatological framework. Just as Christians view the Antichrist as the ultimate deceiver before Christ's return, Shia Muslims see the Dajjal as the false Messiah who will bring widespread corruption and tyranny before being defeated by the Mahdi. The shared religious concerns over Israel's messianic aspirations highlight the deep theological implications of its actions, making these geopolitical moves far more than simple territorial disputes—they are, for many, signs of the approaching end times.

Alexander Dugin’s Geopolitical and Eschatological Analysis

Summary of Dugin’s Interpretation of Israeli Actions and Messianic Dominance as the Rise of the Antichrist

Alexander Dugin, a prominent Russian philosopher and political theorist, views Israeli geopolitical maneuvers, particularly the far-right push for the rebuilding of the Third Temple, as more than mere territorial or political moves. In Dugin's interpretation, these actions align with a broader eschatological vision aimed at establishing global Messianic dominance, which he perceives as a precursor to the rise of the Antichrist. He argues that Israel’s far-right, especially under leaders like Benjamin Netanyahu, is driven by the belief that they are paving the way for the Jewish Messiah. However, from Dugin’s Christian Orthodox perspective, this Messianic figure is not the true Messiah but rather the Antichrist, who will deceive the Jewish people and the world.

Dugin suggests that Israel’s Messianic aspirations, particularly the ambition to rebuild the Third Temple, are part of a larger effort to establish a form of global control that is religious in nature but inherently deceptive. In his view, these actions are closely tied to the idea of creating a "Greater Israel" and bringing about the end times, as foretold in Christian and Islamic eschatology. The construction of the Third Temple, for example, is not seen as a step toward peace, but rather a movement toward the apocalyptic reign of the Antichrist, who will falsely claim to be the awaited savior of humanity.

For Dugin, this interpretation is not limited to spiritual or theological matters but extends into geopolitical strategy. He sees Israel’s dominance over the Middle East and its influence on global politics, especially through Western alliances, as integral to this eschatological vision. The fulfillment of Jewish Messianic prophecies, according to Dugin, is intertwined with Israel's increasing control over sacred spaces and its broader political ambitions, which he equates with the workings of the Antichrist.

The Importance of Dugin’s Multipolar Worldview in Understanding Israel’s Role in Shaping the End Times

A key element of Dugin’s worldview is his rejection of unipolarity—the idea of a single global power dominating world affairs—and his advocacy for a multipolar

world. He sees Israel's role in the Middle East as part of the larger global struggle between unipolarity, represented by the Western-dominated global order, and multipolarity, which he champions as a return to traditional, civilizational states that resist global homogenization.

In Dugin's geopolitical framework, Israel's actions are aligned with the forces of unipolarity. The far-right Zionist vision of a "Greater Israel" is not merely a local or regional ambition but part of a broader effort to maintain a global, Western-led dominance. According to Dugin, this project is supported by Western powers, especially the United States, which he sees as complicit in advancing Israel's geopolitical and eschatological aims. He views this as a distortion of Christian values and an alignment with the forces of the Antichrist.

Dugin's multipolar vision opposes this by advocating for the resurgence of traditional civilizations, each with its distinct cultural and spiritual identity, resisting the imposition of a singular, global order. From this perspective, Israel's geopolitical ambitions are not just a regional issue but a crucial part of the global struggle between good and evil, with Israel's Messianic project being cast as a deceptive and dangerous path toward the reign of the Antichrist. In Dugin's eyes, the ultimate victory of multipolarity would prevent the Antichrist's global reign by preserving the sovereignty and spiritual integrity of various nations and civilizations.

Why Dugin's View is Compelling to Both Christian and Islamic Perspectives

Dugin's interpretation resonates with both Christian and Islamic eschatological frameworks, making his analysis compelling across religious lines. From a Christian Orthodox standpoint, Dugin's warning about the rise of the Antichrist through Israeli geopolitical moves aligns with traditional Christian teachings about the end times. Many Christians, particularly in evangelical and Orthodox circles, share the belief that the Antichrist will emerge as a false messiah, deceiving the Jewish people and the world. Dugin's geopolitical critique thus dovetails with Christian concerns about the fulfillment of Biblical prophecies surrounding the Antichrist, especially in relation to the rebuilding of the Temple and the establishment of global political power.

Similarly, from an Islamic perspective, particularly within Shia eschatology, Dugin's analysis of Israel's actions aligns with the belief that the Dajjal (the Islamic Antichrist) will arise before the Mahdi's return. The destruction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the construction of the Third Temple are viewed as critical signs of the Dajjal's imminent appearance. Dugin's interpretation that Israeli political and religious ambitions are preparing the way for a global deceiver resonates with Shia concerns, particularly those voiced by Iranian leaders and Hezbollah, who view Israel's actions as a prelude to the Dajjal's rule.

The alignment of Dugin's analysis with both Christian and Islamic eschatologies makes his worldview appealing to those who see Israel's geopolitical moves as part of a broader, spiritually significant struggle. By framing Israel's actions in terms of a multipolar versus unipolar global order, Dugin adds a geopolitical dimension that strengthens the eschatological concerns of both religious traditions. His critique offers a unifying narrative for Christian and Islamic perspectives on the end times, centered on the belief that Israel's actions are not leading to divine redemption but rather to the reign of the Antichrist or Dajjal.

Geopolitical Consequences and the "Greater Israel" Project

The Concept of "Greater Israel" and Current Israeli Policies

The term "Greater Israel" refers to a historical and religious vision in some Zionist and far-right Jewish circles that imagines Israel expanding to encompass a much larger territory than its current borders. This idea is rooted in interpretations of Biblical promises, particularly those found in the Torah, where God grants the descendants of Abraham a vast land stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates (Genesis 15:18). In modern times, the "Greater Israel" project is often associated with expansionist policies, including the control of Palestinian territories, parts of Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, and possibly even extending into Egypt.

Politically, the vision of Greater Israel has gained traction within far-right Israeli political movements. Leaders and parties that advocate for Israeli sovereignty over all of historic Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) see this as a step toward the fulfillment of a divine mandate. For example, figures like Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich openly promote annexationist policies and assert Jewish rights

over the Temple Mount, further escalating tensions in the region. The establishment of settlements in the West Bank is viewed by some groups as part of a broader, incremental strategy to realize the Greater Israel vision, cementing control over the land promised in Biblical narratives.

Current Israeli policies, especially regarding settlement expansion, the status of East Jerusalem, and the potential rebuilding of the Third Temple, can be seen as aligning with this vision. While the Israeli government officially maintains a more pragmatic stance in international diplomacy, the influence of far-right factions within the country's political landscape suggests that the dream of Greater Israel remains alive in certain circles. These policies, such as settlement expansion and the push for annexation of parts of the West Bank, signal a shift toward this eschatological and territorial goal.

Broader Impact on the Middle East: Shia-Sunni Relations and Global Geopolitics

The pursuit of a "Greater Israel" has far-reaching implications not only for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but also for the broader Middle East, particularly in terms of Shia-Sunni dynamics and global geopolitics. The idea of expanding Israel's borders beyond its internationally recognized boundaries is seen as a threat by both Sunni and Shia Muslim nations, though their responses and motivations differ.

For Sunni-majority nations like Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, any move toward Israeli territorial expansion is a destabilizing force in the region. Although some of these countries have engaged in peace agreements or normalization deals with Israel, the idea of a "Greater Israel" jeopardizes the delicate balance that has been maintained. Sunni governments often face internal pressures from their populations, who view Israeli policies as unjust and a violation of Palestinian rights. The prospect of Israel expanding its borders at the expense of Arab nations fuels anti-Israel sentiment, potentially straining diplomatic relationships.

Shia-majority Iran, which supports groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Axis of Resistance, interprets Israeli expansionist policies as a direct affront to its own eschatological worldview. The Iranian government views Israel's actions, particularly regarding the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the broader vision of Greater Israel, as part of a Western-backed effort to suppress Islamic sovereignty in the region. For Shia leaders, Israel's policies are seen as aligning with the rise of the

Dajjal (the Islamic Antichrist), making the struggle against Israeli territorial ambitions not just a geopolitical conflict but a spiritual and religious battle as well.

The West's alignment with Israel, particularly the strong U.S.-Israel relationship, adds a global dimension to these regional tensions. Many Western nations support Israel's right to defend itself and maintain security, often providing military and economic aid. This alignment, however, is seen by many in the Middle East as enabling Israeli expansionist policies and exacerbating regional instability. The continued U.S. support for Israel, especially in the context of settlement policies and sovereignty over Jerusalem, positions the West as a backer of the Greater Israel project, further inflaming tensions between Israel and its neighbors.

The Development of "Greater Israel" and its Ties to End-Times Prophecy in Christian and Islamic Traditions

The idea of a "Greater Israel" is deeply tied to eschatological beliefs in both Christian and Islamic traditions, with profound implications for end-times prophecy.

In **Christian eschatology**, particularly among evangelical and fundamentalist groups, the expansion of Israel is often viewed as part of God's divine plan for the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. According to certain interpretations of the Bible, the restoration of Israel to its Biblical borders and the rebuilding of the Third Temple are necessary steps leading up to the return of Jesus Christ. These Christians believe that once Israel is fully restored and the Temple is rebuilt, the Antichrist will rise to power, deceiving the world before Christ's Second Coming (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, Revelation 13). The geopolitical moves of Israel, particularly the settlement expansion and political control over Jerusalem, are thus seen as aligning with these prophetic expectations.

In **Islamic eschatology**, particularly within Shia Islam, the concept of a "Greater Israel" is viewed as a sign of the coming of the Dajjal (the Islamic Antichrist). The destruction of Islamic holy sites, particularly the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the expansion of Israeli control are seen as key triggers for the emergence of the Dajjal, who will deceive the world before being defeated by the Mahdi (the hidden Twelfth Imam in Shia tradition) and Jesus (who plays a significant role in Islamic eschatology as well). For many Shia Muslims, the Greater Israel project is

not merely a geopolitical maneuver but part of a grand spiritual deception that must be resisted.

Both Christian and Islamic eschatologies, though differing in many details, share a belief that the expansion of Israel and the rebuilding of the Temple are signs of the end times. For Christians, this is tied to the return of Christ, while for Muslims, it is tied to the rise of the Dajjal and the eventual triumph of the Mahdi and Jesus. In both cases, the Greater Israel project is seen as part of a divine, albeit controversial, plan that is inexorably leading humanity toward the final confrontation between good and evil.

Conclusion

The "Greater Israel" project has significant geopolitical and eschatological implications. Politically, it fuels tensions within the Middle East, straining both Shia-Sunni relations and global geopolitics, especially given the West's support for Israel. Religiously, it ties into end-times prophecies in both Christianity and Islam, with both traditions interpreting Israeli expansion as a sign of the approaching end times. As Israel continues to assert control over disputed territories, the vision of a "Greater Israel" becomes more than just a political ambition; it becomes a focal point in the eschatological narratives of the world's major monotheistic faiths.

The Coming Conflict: A Christian Interpretation

Israel's Actions as Paving the Way for the Antichrist

From a Christian eschatological perspective, many believe that Israel's modern political and territorial actions may be laying the groundwork for the fulfillment of end-times prophecy, specifically regarding the rise of the Antichrist. Key to this belief is the concept of the **Third Temple**. According to certain evangelical and fundamentalist interpretations of Biblical prophecy, the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem is a pivotal event that will signal the beginning of the end times.

In the Book of Daniel (Daniel 9:27) and the New Testament (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, Revelation 13:14-17), the Antichrist is described as a figure who will desecrate the rebuilt Temple, setting up the "abomination of desolation" and declaring

himself to be God. This desecration will occur midway through a seven-year period of tribulation, a time of great suffering that Christians believe will precede the Second Coming of Christ.

The push by certain far-right Israeli political factions to rebuild the Third Temple, coupled with increasing control over Jerusalem, especially the Temple Mount, is viewed by some Christians as directly aligning with these Biblical prophecies. They interpret these developments as evidence that the Antichrist will soon emerge, deceive the Jewish people by claiming to be their Messiah, and establish global dominion. Thus, Israel's actions, while political in nature, are interpreted through a spiritual lens as part of a divine timeline that leads to the Antichrist's reign.

Viewing These Developments in Light of Biblical Teachings and Prophecy

Christians who adhere to premillennial dispensationalism—a popular theological framework that focuses on the literal interpretation of Biblical prophecies—often see current events in Israel as fulfilling specific end-times prophecies. They look to passages from the Old and New Testaments, such as Matthew 24, the Book of Daniel, and Revelation, to guide their understanding of how geopolitical developments signal the approach of the Tribulation and the return of Christ.

Jesus Himself, in Matthew 24:15-16, warns His followers to be watchful for the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by the prophet Daniel. He refers to a time of unprecedented tribulation that will occur before His return, and many Christians believe that this abomination will take place in a rebuilt Jewish Temple. The increasing movement toward rebuilding the Temple, therefore, is seen as a clear indicator that the events leading to the Antichrist's rule and Christ's return are imminent.

In light of these teachings, Christians are encouraged to be spiritually vigilant and discerning. The Bible emphasizes the need for believers to recognize the signs of the times while remaining steadfast in their faith. Many Christians view Israel's actions not as random geopolitical maneuvers but as essential components in the unfolding of God's divine plan. Consequently, they believe these developments should motivate believers to focus on prayer, evangelism, and preparation for Christ's return, as Jesus commanded His followers to "watch" and be ready (Mark 13:32-37).

The Role of the Church in Interpreting and Responding to These Events

The Church plays a critical role in interpreting and responding to these events, as it is tasked with guiding believers through times of spiritual confusion and uncertainty. Throughout history, the Church has been responsible for teaching Biblical prophecy and helping Christians understand how to respond to unfolding events in light of Scripture.

One key responsibility of the Church is to ensure that believers do not fall into deception, as warned in the New Testament. Jesus cautioned His followers in Matthew 24:24 that false Christs and false prophets would arise in the last days, performing great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. The Antichrist will likely come as a deceptive figure, and the Church must prepare believers to recognize and reject such deception. This involves teaching sound doctrine, emphasizing the authority of Scripture, and encouraging believers to deepen their relationship with Christ.

In addition to fostering discernment, the Church must also remind Christians of the ultimate hope they have in the return of Christ. While the rise of the Antichrist and the tribulation period are events to be taken seriously, the Christian message is ultimately one of victory. The Bible promises that Jesus will defeat the Antichrist (Revelation 19:11-21) and establish His eternal Kingdom of peace and justice. Therefore, the Church must balance the sobering reality of end-times prophecies with the message of hope and triumph that is central to the Christian faith.

Moreover, the Church has a mission to continue proclaiming the Gospel to the nations. As geopolitical events unfold, many Christian leaders emphasize that believers should focus on fulfilling the Great Commission, preaching the Gospel to all people before the end comes (Matthew 28:19-20). In this sense, Israel's actions, while significant in terms of prophecy, are not the ultimate focus; rather, the Church is called to be a witness to the world and to lead people to Christ before His return.

Conclusion

Israel's actions, particularly in regard to the rebuilding of the Temple and the increasing control over Jerusalem, are interpreted by many Christians as paving

the way for the Antichrist and the fulfillment of end-times prophecies. The Church has an essential role in helping believers understand these events through the lens of Scripture, encouraging vigilance, discernment, and hope in the face of unfolding prophecy. As the Church anticipates the Second Coming of Christ, it must also continue its mission of evangelism and discipleship, preparing the world for the final fulfillment of God's plan.

Conclusion

Recap of Key Arguments Regarding Israel's Role in Hastening the Messianic Age

Throughout this paper, we have explored Israel's modern geopolitical actions—particularly its focus on sovereignty over the Temple Mount and the potential rebuilding of the Third Temple—as pivotal developments in both Jewish and Christian eschatological narratives. In the Jewish tradition, these actions are seen as critical steps toward the realization of the Messianic age, where the restoration of the Temple is a necessary precondition for the arrival of the Jewish Messiah. Meanwhile, from a Christian eschatological perspective, the same developments are viewed through the lens of prophecy as setting the stage for the rise of the Antichrist, who will deceive many before the second coming of Christ.

By interpreting these geopolitical moves within the framework of Biblical prophecy, both Jewish and Christian eschatologies anticipate profound spiritual shifts as these events unfold. This alignment of religious expectations highlights Israel's unique role in what many see as the final act of a divine plan leading to the end of the world as we know it and the subsequent establishment of God's kingdom.

The Potential Fulfillment of Both Jewish and Christian Eschatological Prophecies

The possibility of the **Third Temple** being rebuilt not only fulfills ancient Jewish prophecies but also positions Israel at the heart of Christian end-times narratives. For Jews, this marks the long-awaited arrival of the Messiah, a figure who will restore divine order and bring peace to the world. However, for Christians, the same event signals the approach of the **Tribulation**, a period of great suffering preceding Christ's return, and the rise of the **Antichrist**, who will desecrate the Temple and deceive the nations.

This dual fulfillment of eschatological prophecies carries significant implications for the global Christian community. On one hand, it calls for heightened vigilance, as Christians are warned to discern the deception of the Antichrist, who will present himself as a messianic figure. On the other hand, it reinforces the hope Christians have in Christ's ultimate victory over evil, as foretold in the **Book of Revelation**. The unfolding of these prophecies also brings into sharper focus the interconnectedness of Jewish and Christian eschatological timelines, revealing a shared anticipation of climactic, world-altering events.

Closing Thoughts on the Importance of Being Spiritually Prepared

Given the weight of these potential developments, it is imperative for Christians to be spiritually prepared. Jesus Himself warns His followers in **Matthew 24:42** to "keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." In light of the geopolitical and spiritual shifts discussed in this paper, the Church has a duty to remain vigilant, fostering discernment among believers and helping them navigate these prophetic events with faith and wisdom.

The events unfolding in Israel and their connection to end-times prophecies should inspire Christians to deepen their relationship with Christ, reflect on the teachings of Scripture, and live out their faith with renewed urgency. As the world moves closer to what many believe are the fulfillment of eschatological prophecies, Christians are called to not only anticipate Christ's return but to actively share the Gospel and bring others to the knowledge of salvation.

In conclusion, while Israel's actions may be interpreted as hastening the arrival of both the Jewish Messiah and the Antichrist, the ultimate message for Christians is one of hope and triumph. The rise of the Antichrist, though terrifying, is only a precursor to the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His eternal kingdom. Therefore, spiritual preparedness, rooted in faith and understanding of Biblical prophecy, is essential as these momentous events continue to unfold on the global stage.

References

1. Dugin, Alexander. *The Fourth Political Theory*. Arktos Media Ltd, 2012.
    - This book outlines Dugin's geopolitical theories, including his vision of a multipolar world and the spiritual and eschatological conflicts between Western and Eastern civilizations.
2. Arktos Media. "Nasrallah's Death Marks Israel's Apocalyptic Rise." Arktos.com, 2023.
    - This article discusses Dugin's perspective on Israel's far-right government, its push towards Messianic dominance, and the parallels with Christian and Islamic interpretations of the Antichrist and Dajjal Arktos.com.
3. Pravda EN. "Alexander Dugin: An Interesting Summary Review of the Political Eschatology of the Israeli-Islamic Conflict and the Antichrist Project." Pravda.com, 2023.
    - This source provides Dugin's views on the Israeli-Islamic conflict, particularly how Israeli policies may be paving the way for the emergence of the Antichrist, according to Christian and Islamic eschatological frameworks Pravda.
4. Arktos Media. "The West Is Not 'Judeo-Christian'." Arktos.com, 2023.
    - This article elaborates on Dugin's view of the West's alliance with Israel and how this relationship contributes to global unipolarity, which Dugin sees as spiritually aligned with the Antichrist Arktos.com.
5. Arktos Media. "The Conflict in the Middle East and Dugin's Multipolar World." Arktos.com, 2023.
    - This piece explores the concept of multipolarity and Dugin's critique of Western global dominance, with a focus on Israel's geopolitical actions and their spiritual significance Arktos.com.

6. The Holy Bible, New International Version.
    - Specific references include Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, and Revelation 13, which discuss the role of the Antichrist and end-times events that Christians believe are signaled by geopolitical developments in Israel.
7. Rahim, Farid. *The Islamic View of the Antichrist (Dajjal) and the Mahdi*. Dar al-Islam Publishers, 2015.
    - A detailed exploration of Islamic eschatology, particularly the Shia interpretation of the Dajjal and how modern geopolitical developments, especially in Israel, are viewed as signs of his rise.
8. Boylan, Michael. *Christian Eschatology: The Antichrist and the End Times*. Crossway, 2018.
    - This book covers Christian perspectives on the Antichrist, the rebuilding of the Third Temple, and how these themes intersect with current events in Israel.
9. The Temple Institute. "Preparing for the Third Temple." Templeinstitute.org, 2023.
    - Information on the Jewish push for the rebuilding of the Third Temple and the religious and political movements involved, including the eschatological significance from a Jewish perspective.

This reference list provides a foundation of primary and secondary sources on Christian and Islamic eschatology, Dugin's geopolitical theories, and the modern geopolitical situation in Israel. These materials are essential for understanding the religious and political dimensions of the unfolding events discussed in the paper.